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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BRUSSELS 000493

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SUBJECT: EU FOCUSES ON PAKISTAN, WARY ON AFGHANISTAN,
UNSURE ON CENTRAL EUROPE

Classified By: USEU PolMinCouns Laurence Wohlers for
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C/NF) SUMMARY: Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher met with senior officials from the European Commission and Council and with Representatives of the European Council Political and Security Committee January 25-26 to discuss Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia. European Union interlocutors recommended highlighting positive achievements in Afghanistan to counter negative perceptions that the war,s end is not in sight. While EU representatives expressed concerns about Pakistan,s commitment to the Global War on Terror and its actions along the border with Afghanistan, all recognized the importance of enhanced EU-Pakistan engagement, especially in the political arena. The need for a well-designed and well-funded Central Asian strategy and concerns about Uzbekistan were foremost on EU minds in discussions related to that region. END SUMMARY.

Afghanistan: Showcasing continued commitment

12. (C/NF) Assistant Secretary Boucher met European Union Director General for Foreign and Security Policy Robert Cooper on January 25 to discuss developments in Afghanistan. Cooper told Boucher the EU is concerned that &Afghanistan is not winnable.8 A more forceful positive message of recent accomplishments achieved in Afghanistan is needed to dispel the negative perception held by some Europeans, who wonder if real gains can be made.

13. (C/NF) EU interlocutors appeared impressed with the financial magnitude of the recent multi-billion U.S. dollar budget request to support Afghan stabilization. The EU,s proposed Afghan Police Support Mission, characterized as &modest8 by Cooper, will likely move forward, but will not be joined with a judicial sector reform package.

14. (C/NF) In a January 26 address to the twenty seven-member EU Political and Security Committee, Boucher began by stating that we need to &win the war and win the peace.8 It is not &just about money, but about people.8 Political and Security Committee Representatives listened intently to Boucher highlight accomplishments in Afghanistan in education, where girls have achieved a 40 percent enrollment rate, road network expansion and increased access to health care. He informed the Committee that the 10.6 billion U.S. dollar investment, when approved by Congress, would be used to increase police support, expand and train the Afghan army and police, develop electrical grids and roads, and expand governance to outlying areas. Boucher also noted that the substantial commitment was aimed at countering the Taliban,s threatened &Spring Offensive.8

¶15. (C/NF) Cooper informed Boucher that the EU is planning to expand political cooperation with Pakistan and increase assistance. An EU-Pakistan high-level dialogue planned for February 8 is intended to elevate EU-Pakistani engagement. EU Counter-terrorism Coordinator Gijs DeVries,s planned visit to Pakistan February 7-8 will focus on increased cooperation in the War on Terror. EU representatives have expressed separately that Pakistan uses its progress on counter-terrorism efforts and accommodation of Afghan refugees as bargaining chips to push for greater EU market access. Pakistani representatives have communicated to the EU that EU &trade, not aid8 is what Pakistan desires most.

¶16. (C/NF) In a separate meeting with European Commission Director General for Asia Jim Moran, Boucher was told that Pakistan has prioritized trade as one of its greatest areas of interest with the EU. Moran said the EU would provide approximately 200 million euros over a four-year period. Reconstruction opportunity zones, assistance in rural development, environmental rehabilitation and resettlement of Afghan refugees are areas under consideration. Moran added the Commission would send an election observation mission to cover the elections planned for the fall.

¶17. (C/NF) The Italian Political and Security Committee Representative questioned Boucher whether applying public pressure on Pakistan makes it more difficult for Musharraf to act in tribal areas and frontier provinces. He wondered whether the worsening personal and political relationship between Afghan President Karzai and President Musharraf

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contributed to Pakistan,s ineffectiveness.

¶18. (C/NF) There is a general feeling that Pakistan should do more to counter terrorism, but defining an effective strategy has been problematic, according to the Dutch Committee Representative. Pakistan is frustrated by the West,s demands that it do more, and points to the approximately 80,000 Pakistani troops, who patrol the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, as well as the mining of the border, as demonstrations of Pakistani commitment to the War on Terror. He wondered aloud what the EU could do to assist with Pakistan,s complaints about the millions of Afghan refugees who reside in camps.

¶19. (C/NF) Boucher told the Political and Security Committee that Pakistan has become critical to the War on Terror and said he believed President Musharraf was personally committed. Stabilization of Pakistan remains important, and it is critical that the international community support Pakistani moves toward democracy, he said. The U.S. plans to increase assistance to Pakistan, especially in border areas.

¶10. (C/NF) Increased high-level meetings between Afghan and Pakistani representatives were also a positive development. Boucher added that while we should be frank in communicating our concerns about effectiveness with Pakistan, we should not lose sight of the need to strongly support Pakistan,s move towards a moderate Muslim state.

¶11. (C/NF) Boucher stated that Pakistan was cooperating with Canada to address concerns related to proposed landmines to prevent illegal movements along the border with Afghanistan. Refugee camps are a legitimate concern, he said, and the international community should design incentives for resettlement. He added the EU should consider possible trade opportunities within a discrete geographic area, such as the border. The U.S. is considering assistance to facilitate movement of duty-free goods, linked to industry diversification (such as marble extraction). Boucher noted that this more narrow type of EU intervention might be more

marketable to EU Member States who are wary of a broad trade agreement with Pakistan.

¶12. (U) An EU-Pakistan Ministerial was held in Berlin on February 8 and resulted in a Joint Declaration. Both parties agreed to hold the first EC-Pakistan Joint Commission in 2007 and to address trade as a part of that dialogue. The Declaration noted further that both parties agreed to:

- development of a broad, formal political dialogue;
- political and regional director-level meetings in between ministerial meetings; and
- expert-level meetings in several policy areas, including: interfaith dialogue, counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, non-proliferation, human rights and good governance.

European Commission on Central Asia: Working on a Strategy

¶13. (C/NF) European Commission Director General for Eastern Europe and Central Asia Hugues Mingarelli informed Assistant Secretary Boucher that a new strategy for Central Asia is

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under preparation and will be presented in June by the EU German Presidency. The intent is to elevate Central Asia in the view of EU Member States. In response to Boucher,s question on how to sustain the German presidency,s focus on Central Asia after the presidency ends, Mingarelli acknowledged there was no guarantee they could. Recommendations made to Portuguese representatives stressed the importance of launching concrete initiatives, with financial backing, by June, to ensure continuity.

¶14. (C/NF) Mingarelli confirmed the budget for Central Asia would increase, but told Boucher the exact amount remained unconfirmed. He estimated an increase from 50 million Euros per year to between 80 to 100 million Euros per year for the five Central Asian countries. He emphasized there was not yet a clear plan on how the funds would be expended, but believed expenditures for energy, transport, good governance, and environment appeared most likely.

¶15. (C/NF) On transportation links within Central Asia, Mingarelli said the European Commission has been helping countries regularize their framework, with some success. They have ministerial level meetings each year to ensure there is a political blessing of the experts, work, which is primarily focused on technical norms and the regulatory environment, he added. Mingarelli added that

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Turkmenistan expressed an interest in EU assistance with education outreach, including exchanges, scholarships, and regional programs.

¶16. (C/NF) A European Commission trip to Uzbekistan to discuss problems in the Andijon region went better than expected, according to Mingarelli,s staff. The Uzbeks were, however, reluctant to discuss details of civilian deaths. The EU considered it an opening, nonetheless, and a second informal discussion is planned. In response to Boucher,s comments on the problems facing U.S.-funded non-governmental organizations that work in Uzbekistan, Mingarelli said EU-sponsored NGOs complained about difficulties, particularly in the area of NGO registration. He was optimistic, though, that the EU could continue effective engagement, despite difficulties.

¶17. (C/NF) Boucher concluded his comments by recommending the EU express appreciation to Kyrgyzstan for the use of Manas Air Base. It is a contribution to the War on Terror and such acknowledgment would be welcomed, he added.

¶18. (C/NF) In remarks to the Political and Security Committee on Central Asia, Boucher characterized the region as

constituting struggling democracies with modest economic and educational opportunities. He said there was great potential given the young population and the apparent desire for democracy. He offered education, technology and the rule of law as possible areas of engagement. Boucher reminded the Committee that countries of the region were particularly concerned about drug smuggling and terrorism.

¶19. (C/NF) The German Representative asked how the U.S. dealt with Uzbekistan and the pace of democratization in Kazakhstan. Boucher said the U.S. continues to pursue effective relations with Uzbekistan in the areas of exchanges, border control and anti-smuggling. On Kazakhstan, Boucher said the U.S. continues to look for greater commitment by Kazakhstan and said Kazakhstan must be pressed to identify how its actions will exemplify the ideals of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

¶20. (U) This cable has been cleared by the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs.

GRAY

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